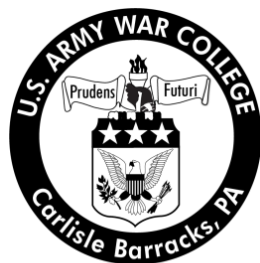


# Civilian Research Project Senior Service College Fellow

## US Army Female Engagement Teams: Professionalizing the Training and Looking Forward

by

Lieutenant Colonel Janet R. Holliday  
United States Army



United States Army War College  
Class of 2012

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USAWC CIVILIAN RESEARCH PROJECT

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AND LOOKING FORWARD**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Long oppressed by tribal culture, war and the Taliban, the women of Afghanistan are beginning to make positive progress. Afghan women, after years of being denied basic freedoms, are more receptive to assistance from coalition forces that recognize the importance of including the other fifty percent of the population. The culture of rural Afghanistan does not allow male Soldiers to speak to female Afghans; thus, Female Engagement Teams (FETs) have a unique niche in reaching these women and increasing their self-worth through education and small business opportunities, allowing the women to then use that increased self-worth to positively influence the male members of the families. History has shown Afghanistan is not a country that functions well with a strong central government. The strategic goal of a stable Afghanistan will have to be reached one village at a time. This project explores how the FET effort has grown from an ad hoc group of female Soldiers assisting with searches to something close to US military doctrine. However, the Army needs to put more emphasis on proper staffing, employment and training of the teams to ensure meeting strategic goals. Finally, the Army must begin to institutionalize these practices for future contingencies.





## US ARMY FEMALE ENGAGEMENT TEAMS: PROFESSIONALIZING THE TRAINING AND LOOKING FORWARD

Qatra qatra darya mesha (Drop by drop a river is made)  
—Afghan Proverb

The strategic framework for US efforts in Afghanistan includes three lines of effort - security, governance, and development. Securing the population and quelling the insurgency in rural Afghanistan remain two of the biggest challenges facing Coalition Forces, along with assisting the non-governmental organizations in providing sustainable jobs and agricultural opportunities to Afghans. These economic opportunities provide income and lessen the attraction of joining the insurgency. Coalition Forces are finding that one of the best ways to get at these strategic goals is through the use of female Marines and Soldiers to influence the basic unit of the family, which is the center of gravity in Afghan culture. Over the past decade, Coalition Forces have formed informal Female Engagement Teams mainly through tactical and Provincial Reconstruction Team Civil Affairs Forces as well as Agri-Business Development Teams. To date, though, US Army efforts remain ad hoc and disorganized. Training and employment is not standardized. The Army needs to put more emphasis on proper staffing, employment and training of Female Engagement Teams to ensure we are meeting strategic goals and objectives, and begin to institutionalize these practices for future contingencies.

The US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24 recognizes that groups such as families and tribes play critical roles in influencing the outcome of a counter-insurgency (COIN) effort, but it erroneously claims they are beyond the control of military forces or civilian governing institutions .<sup>1</sup> While they may

be beyond the direct control, they are not beyond the influence. Female Soldiers can and are building relationships with Afghan women and men, empowering them through economic development programs, education, and training. They are doing so at several competing levels, to include the battalions and brigades, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, the Agri-Business Development Teams, and Special Operations Cultural Support Teams. These teams are operating in a semi-coordinated battle space. Their efforts can be redundant and repetitive when not properly coordinated across the battle space and when coupled with the current non-standardized training, the resulting effort is not nearly as effective as it could be in reaching the entire the population.

Defeating the insurgency must start with the family and the village. It is clear that the current strategy of attempting to establish a strong central government simply is not working. According to Seth Jones, an expert on Afghanistan and local defense forces, the current top-down state-building and counter-insurgency efforts can only work if accompanied by strong bottom-up programs that reach out to local leaders.

Experts on state building and counterinsurgency in Afghanistan fall into two competing camps. The first believes that Afghanistan will never be stable and secure without a powerful central government capable of providing services to Afghans in all corners of the country. The other insists that Afghanistan is, and always has been, a quintessentially decentralized society, making it necessary to build local institutions to create security and stability.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, Sarah Chayes, a former reporter-turned-humanitarian worker who lived in Afghanistan for several years, argues that the basic nature of the country of Afghanistan is that of *Yaghestan*.<sup>3</sup> *Yaghestan* is a Persian word that means a land of the rebellious, of the incorrigibly ungovernable.<sup>4</sup> As evidence, she cites the fact that every time a foreign government (for example, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and perhaps, most recently, the Coalition Forces) has tried to shape Afghanistan into a central government,

it collapses itself back into tribal factions.<sup>5</sup> This does not bode well for the Coalition Forces should we single-mindedly pursue a strategy of supporting the Karzai government without continuing the grassroots work that is going on in the villages. In fact, building the stability of the country needs to work at even a lower level than the villages by starting with the lowest common denominator, the families.

Stabilizing the families through building relationships and economic opportunities should be a key component of what US Special Operations Forces have coined as Village Stability Operations, or VSO, especially “since the Taliban’s current insurgency against the International Security Assistance Force ... is of a predominantly rural form.”<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, legitimate Village Stability Operations have one crucial component that outside influencers often overlook: fully half the population of any village is female. Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould explain how to achieve our strategic goals in Afghanistan by recommending that the coalition forces “empower Afghanistan’s women. Safeguarding women’s rights in Afghanistan under equal protection under the law will bring about Afghanistan’s economic recovery faster.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore economic recovery means stable families, and stable villages that have no interest in supporting an insurgency.

Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, identifies several important elements that make up a successful insurgency. Influencing the families can reach at least three of these elements: the Combatants, the Mass Base and the Auxiliaries.<sup>8</sup> This will assist in stabilizing the villages and ultimately, the entire country. Auxiliaries are active sympathizers who provide important support activities such as running safe houses, storing weapons and supplies, acting as couriers, and providing passive information

gathering.<sup>9</sup> These support personnel are difficult to identify since they are not active combatants and may be storekeepers, taxi drivers, and even those purporting to support Coalition Forces. The one thing most Auxiliaries have in common, though, are the family ties through which every Afghan identifies. A successful engagement with the females in the affected family can not only provide information on what the Auxiliary is doing, but can also help to exert strong pressure on him to stop supporting the insurgency. Family pressure can also influence the Combatants and Mass Base, those who fight and those that support the insurgency,<sup>10</sup> in the same way. Family pressure can identify those who are involved, bring pressure to stop and ultimately, provide alternatives to participating in the insurgency such as accepting microloans to start small businesses.

Although intelligence gathering certainly happens when FETs at the tactical level speak to the women in the villages, the main purpose of FETs is to serve the Coalition Forces broader strategic goals of reintegrating the insurgents and reconstituting the country by establishing relationships. The females on the teams, generally a junior officer, junior NCO and a Soldier, provide basic medical care, hygiene classes, and educational opportunities to assist in setting up small businesses. These efforts increase the sense of self-worth for a group of women long disenfranchised by tribal culture, war and even more brutally, by five years of Taliban rule. This increased sense of self-worth and positive image of the Coalition Forces will ultimately trickle down to the children, because "... children are like sponges (and they) learn from (the positive impact of the FETs). They won't be influenced into necessarily joining the insurgency or more often supporting the insurgency."<sup>11</sup> FETS, then, can make a valuable and

unparalleled contribution to the strategic goals of reintegrating the insurgents by strengthening the family unit and reconstituting the country through the renewed self-worth and economic contributions of the female half of the population. This also presents a positive face of Coalition Forces that will network to other family members.

### History of Women in Afghanistan

Before exploring the ways Female Engagement Teams have and can continue to empower the women of Afghanistan and enhance VSO, it is important first to understand the place of the women of Afghanistan in the volatile history of the country. The birth of modern Afghanistan is considered to be during the rule of Abdur Rahman Khan from 1880 to 1901.<sup>12</sup> Abdur Rahmann believed in just treatment for women and his wife was the first Afghan queen to appear in public in European dress without a veil.<sup>13</sup> Upon his death, his son Amir Habibullah Khan took over and continued his father's policies.<sup>14</sup> He established the first college in Afghanistan and his four wives were seen in public without veils and wearing western clothes.<sup>15</sup> He also opened a school for girls with English curriculum,<sup>16</sup> angering many tribal leaders and mullahs, or religious leaders. He was murdered while on a hunting trip in February of 1919, and many believe this was directly related to the reforms he put in place for women.<sup>17</sup> However, the cause of women's rights did not die with Amir Habibullah Khan. His son, Amanullah, became the king and married the daughter of Mahmud Tarzi, a modernist journalist who viewed women as people who deserved full citizenship and believed educated women were an asset to future generations.<sup>18</sup> Just after World War I, Amanullh gained notoriety on the issue of women's rights, "by discouraging the veil and the oppression of women ... while introducing secular education as well as education

for girls ... (in 1923) he took the truly revolutionary step of giving women the right to vote.”<sup>19</sup>

However, Amanullah soon fell afoul of the mullahs as well. In 1924, a loya jirga (assembly of regional leaders and tribal chiefs) watered down some of his reforms that were relating to the rights and status of women.<sup>20</sup> In an event that resonates with Afghan women even today, his wife Queen Soraya, tore off her veil in public at the conclusion of one of his speeches in which he claimed that Islam did not require women to cover their bodies or wear any special kind of veil.<sup>21</sup> When the pair returned from a tour of Europe in which photographers captured the Queen without a veil and having her hand kissed by the leader of France, things turned hostile and the religious leaders eventually forced him out of office.<sup>22</sup> Leaders then reinstituted previous controls on women. Although Nadir Shah did open some schools for girls in 1931 and women began to play a role outside the family again during Daoud’s reign of the 1960’s,<sup>23</sup> the second era of women’s reform did not occur until the late 1970’s.<sup>24</sup>

Interestingly enough, the second era of women’s reform came during the time Afghanistan had very close ties to the Soviet Union, including a “Treaty of Friendship” that guaranteed the Soviet Union’s support for Afghanistan, which was clearly recognized as a satellite state.<sup>25</sup> The 1970’s saw a rise in women’s education, faculty in the universities, and representatives in the Parliament.<sup>26</sup> The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), backed by the Soviets, rose to power and introduced mass literacy for women and men of all ages.<sup>27</sup> Women enjoyed unprecedented access to jobs as teachers, doctors, and in private corporations during the period until 1989 when the Soviets finally left Afghanistan, collapsing the country into civil war. The

Mujahideen took over Kabul in 1992 and declared Afghanistan an Islamic state.<sup>28</sup> As early as 1994, when the Taliban began to advance through Afghanistan, new rules forbid women from working and excluded girls from schools. In addition, the Talibs forced women to wear the *birqa* and not leave their homes without a close male relative or *mahran*.<sup>29</sup> During the period from 1992-1996, unprecedented barbarism to include public beatings and death by stoning occurred against women.<sup>30</sup> Even when the Northern Alliance, with US assistance, defeated the Taliban in 2001, the women of Afghanistan held out scant hope for a better life, as they felt the Northern Alliance was also mainly Mujahideen and had blood on their hands as well.<sup>31</sup> This turned out to be prophetic as women continued in their state of oppression and still have very few rights today, fully ten years later.

While it is widely believed that the women of Afghanistan are now full participants in the daily life of their country, and despite the 2011 Bonn Conference which worked to put together a new government for Afghanistan that included a role for women,<sup>32</sup> Human Rights Watch found this not to be true, particularly in the rural areas.

Woman and girls in many of these areas (with significant insurgent activity) have found that some of the oppression of Taliban rule from 1996 to 2001 has returned. While these tend to be areas already socially and religiously conservative, the narratives of the women interviewed show how severely insurgent factions impact their lives ... since the resurgence of Taliban and other militant groups took root, from 2005-2006 onwards, women's rights came quickly under attack again.<sup>33</sup>

In fact, the report from Human Rights Watch goes on to explain that many of the existing insurgency commanders at all levels are behaving exactly like they did when the Taliban were first in power less than ten years ago, and they are repressing the rights of women at will.<sup>34</sup> The other problem is that some of the worst women's rights abuses come not from the Taliban, but from rural Afghan society, which is steeped in

traditional views of how women should behave.<sup>35</sup> Those views will be explored later in this paper.

Fitzgerald and Gould found that although the new constitution of Afghanistan ostensibly guarantees women's rights, press releases and statistics do not tell the true story.<sup>36</sup> Health care and a lack of education remain major problems. Approximately one percent of girls in the rural communities attends school. The mother and infant mortality rates are significantly high, with, in some cases, one out of 16 women dying during childbirth.<sup>37</sup> Of the 2.4 million girls currently in school, a disproportionate number of them – 1.9 million – are in primary school, which signals a significant drop-off after the sixth grade.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, that number only reflects enrollment and not attendance,<sup>39</sup> as it is virtually impossible to determine how many of these girls attend class on a regular basis. In fact, in 2009, 22 percent of female students were listed as absent for the entire year or listed as permanently absent.<sup>40</sup> A generation of women now exists who have never attended school and who are unable to educate their daughters about basic matters such as hygiene and childbirth. There are high rates of pelvic infection because of the lack of knowledge about menstruation, as well as high rates of mental and neurological disease among the women, including Post-Traumatic Stress, anxiety and depression.<sup>41</sup> Women who are not literate and not educated have no choice but to believe what they are told about the intentions of Coalition Forces. These women are set up for a lifetime of subjugation without some exposure to outside influences.<sup>42</sup> Without enforcement or oversight in the countryside outside Kabul and without some solid guarantees of security, as well as strict accounting of government officials at all levels, the hard-fought women's rights espoused in the constitution are meaningless.<sup>43</sup>



The women of Afghanistan, then, have literally been prisoners in their homes for several years and they continue to face oppression on many levels, both from the insurgency and long-lived cultural traditions. To illustrate, this oppression includes men forcing nine and ten year old girls into arranged marriages and outside Kabul, almost all women over thirteen are still required to wear the birqa by male family members.<sup>44</sup> The years of illiteracy, lack of access to education, basic knowledge about hygiene and child birth, and a “learned helplessness,”<sup>45</sup> that the women pass down to their daughters and grand-daughters permeates the villages whose stability is crucial to the rebuilding of the country. Only by involving the women, the center of the family unit, can we ensure lasting stability because “when women’s voices are included, they foster reconciliation, improve relations between former warring parties in local communities, and strengthen and sustain civil society.”<sup>46</sup>

#### The Role of Women in Pashtun Culture

US Special Forces are currently practicing Village Stability Operations, a bottom-up approach to battling the insurgency by imbedding operators in the villages to support security and promote and support socio-economic development and good governance.<sup>47</sup> In these operations, the culture of the local people matters greatly to counterinsurgency efforts but is not always considered important by the “steely-eyed killers” of the General Purpose Forces. In fact, combat troops in Afghanistan as recently as 2009 believed the locals “unworthy of consideration – except as targets.”<sup>48</sup> Many incidents are on record of US Soldiers using excessive force with locals, giving them unflattering nicknames, and treating them as second-class citizens not just out of ignorance of their culture, but also as retaliation for perceived or even real acts of

hostility. This type of attitude has proven counter-productive time and time again, and the future of stability in Afghanistan relies on “creat(ing) and foster(ing) an attitude that it is “cool” to know the human terrain, to develop relationships with locals and an ever-growing personal knowledge and understanding of their lives.”<sup>49</sup> Special Operators have conducted counterinsurgency operations this way for years, but the General Purpose Forces have labored under the illusion that it simply was not their job to get to know the locals; rather, they were there to force people into submission and quell violence. The future of Village Stability Operations, however, requires the ability of both Special Operators and General Purpose Forces to influence the villages through relationships and empowerment of the locals, in particular the women.

Before entering into an examination of the Pashtun culture and how Coalition Forces’ females can impact the family unit, it is important to realize that “Afghanistan’s population of 30 million people is divided into seven major ethnic groups-the Pashtuns, the Tajiks, the Hazaras, the Uzbeks, the Aimaqs, the Turkmens, and the Baluchis-and many smaller ones.”<sup>50</sup> Scholars agree, however, that the Pushtuns are the largest group. In addition, the Pushtuns primarily dominate the areas where Coalition Forces are fighting the insurgency and can be construed as representative of the population since, “the pride of the Pukhtun (Pushtun) is actually a characteristic feature of Muslim tribesmen in general.”<sup>51</sup> Even if physically isolated from the great Islamic urban center, (the Pushtun) share with them a common religion and ethic, and believe themselves to be the repository of simple, “pure virtues, as opposed to the corrupting influences of civilization.”<sup>52</sup> Therefore, although it would be naïve to claim these ethnic groups are exactly the same, it is possible to draw some parallels between them. Fully 85% of

Afghan women are rural while 15% are considered to be urban.<sup>53</sup> This paper will predominantly concern itself with the rural women of the Pashtun society which is where most of the work is occurring with Female Engagement Teams.

For further contextualization, it is important to realize that the historical notion of “tribe” in Afghanistan may not necessarily be the correct way to view the social construct of the country.<sup>54</sup> Those who study the country of Afghanistan extensively do not use the word “tribe;” rather, they use the word *qawm*.<sup>55</sup> “The best translation for *qawm* is ‘solidarity group,’ meaning a group of people that acts as a single unit and is organized on the basis of some shared identity.”<sup>56</sup> This shared identity or kinship system is known to anthropologists as a “segmentary lineage organization,”<sup>57</sup> or one that is traced through one line only. “In the Middle East, the system is patrilineal, which means that the male line is followed and all the links through women are ignored.”<sup>58</sup> Of course, as anthropologist Cherry Lindholm goes on to point out, this is the core contradiction of the country because of course, the men descend from women.<sup>59</sup> This is what gives the women power in the *qawm*. Without marriage, there would be no sons to carry on the patrilineal line.

The women are considered the keepers of the family and the backbone of the Afghan society.<sup>60</sup> The Afghan woman is responsible for raising the children in almost every Afghan community.<sup>61</sup> Besides the power of marriage and child-rearing, the women yield power in two other ways: they influence the sons and they have the potential to shame their husbands. Women are at the heart of the kinship network that forms the basis of the family element or compound<sup>62</sup> and these family elements are central to the *qawm*. The women choose brides for their sons and “have considerable status as

mothers. Men love and respect their mothers and listen to their advice.”<sup>63</sup> Because the fathers must share their property with their sons due to the patrilineal line, the sons begin to view the father, although they respect him, as an obstacle to their own ability to gain land.<sup>64</sup> The amount of land that a father can pass on to his sons is limited as a result of the geography of the country, and as a result, the individual men of each succeeding generation inherit less and less because the plots of land are subdivided with the other sons.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, as mentioned earlier, the sons begin to work with the mother against the father with the understanding that, in turn, they will reward their mothers by bringing their wives home to help their mothers. Thus, now that the woman has produced sons to carry on the lineage and inherit the land, her prestige is growing and “men will often seek the advice of their shrewd old mothers who have had many years experience of political strategy and manipulation within their own family compounds.”<sup>66</sup> If these women are predisposed favorably toward the Coalition Forces because our female Soldiers have built relationships with them, they have the ability to influence their sons to have a favorable disposition, too. Or, as Captain Heather Di Silvio put it most succinctly in her Female Engagement Team briefing to the leadership of 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division during pre-deployment training, “Men can’t conduct Jihad without permission from their mothers.”<sup>67</sup>

The second way women influence the men in their homes despite the strict patriarchy of the Pashtun society is through the concept of honor. The code of “Pashtunwali” rules the behavior of the Pashtuns, and “revolve(s) primarily around generosity, hospitality, courage, the obligation to take revenge, and other warrior

virtues.”<sup>68</sup> As part of this notion of Pashtunwali, “the ‘true Pukhtun’ ... prefers death to dishonor.”<sup>69</sup> Interestingly enough, lying, cheating and stealing are considered acceptable in the Pashtun society and guilt does not play much of a role.<sup>70</sup> However, a member of the society who suffers a loss of honor suffers acute shame.<sup>71</sup> Through their behavior, women have great leverage in the home because the man’s reputation is tied directly to the honor of his women. “Men’s reputations and the relations between their households are construed in terms of their control of women’s behavior and the management of household marriages;” thus, through misbehavior a woman can easily ruin the reputation of a man and his household.<sup>72</sup> An “unruly” woman who refuses her arranged marriage, goes outside of her marriage, or commits other infractions deemed inappropriate by the culture can bring great shame to her husband, father, and brothers.

Even though the male members of the household are solely responsible for providing for the rest of the family and monitoring their behavior, “this inequality of status (where the husband has ultimate responsibility for all aspects of a woman’s behavior) does not preclude able women from wielding considerable power within the household.”<sup>73</sup> Instead, the opposite would seem to be true since the men are dependent on the loyalty and good behavior of their “womenfolk” to maintain their reputations.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, with the women “is where the inner life of the country (lies) ... those on whose shoulders rests the entire social structure.”<sup>75</sup> These notions of honor and their place as the bedrock of the social structure give the women leverage within the home and also present a compelling reason why the FETs must have “buy-in” from the male members of a community before building any relationships. Despite the leverage the women

have inside the home, the men do for the most part control access to who they can come in contact with outside the home.

While it may seem to Western cultures that Afghan men would be reluctant to come in contact with Coalition Forces' female Soldiers, the opposite is actually true. It is imperative to the success of the FETs that they work through the men and not around them or behind their backs. Although it is clear that women do have influence within the home, women in fundamentally religious households "may fear reprisal for nonconformity and disobedience."<sup>76</sup> Therefore, FETs must go through the males, starting with the father, the brother, and the elders of a community to first seek permission to interact with the females and to show that the Coalition Forces respect the culture and religion.<sup>77</sup> Shahla Hammond, an Afghan-American woman who advises the United States Marine Corps on the uses of Female Engagement Teams, admits that the Afghan men have "gotten very savvy" and are realizing that the Coalition Forces are interested in helping them through their women, setting up female-owned small businesses, etc., and they are becoming much more willing to help.<sup>78</sup>

Culturally, the Afghan men are not bothered by interaction with Coalition Forces females and in fact prefer to interact with them rather than US men.<sup>79</sup> Much has been made in the literature surrounding the Female Engagement Teams of the assertion that Pashtun men tend to view foreign women troops as a kind of "third gender,"<sup>80</sup> but this is further supported by the observation of Asne Seierstad, a Norwegian journalist who lived with an Afghan family after the fall of the Taliban and felt the Afghans "regarded (her) as some sort of 'bi-gendered' creature. As a Westerner, (she) could mingle with both men and women."<sup>81</sup> In addition, author Deborah Rodriguez found that during her

time in Afghanistan setting up a cosmetology school, that “foreign women are not held to the same rigorous standards as Afghan women. (They) are like another gender entirely, able to wander back and forth between the two otherwise separate worlds of men and women.”<sup>82</sup> Although some FETs have encountered initial resistance with the males,<sup>83</sup> for the most part when the FET members work through the men, they are able to begin to build the relationships that will ultimately strengthen the family units.

### History and Training of the Female Engagement Teams

The Marine Corps and the US Army are still forming doctrine relating to the FETs, but the program is not new. Both the US Army and the US Marine Corps used a similar construct in Iraq in an ad hoc manner. The USMC first had the idea of using female Marines in 2004 when they started the Lioness Program, which recruited female volunteers and attached them to all-male combat units to search Iraqi women and children.<sup>84</sup> These teams also trained Iraqi women how to search other women in an attempt to keep the insurgents from using women and children to carry contraband and explosives.<sup>85</sup> In an interview for an After-Action Review, Colonel Stacy Clardy, Commander of the USMC 2d Regimental Combat Team (RCT) 2, indicated that the Lioness Program was successful in several ways. First, it had the unintended consequence of moderating some of the behavior of the male Marines who had never worked with female Marines before by increasing their professionalism.<sup>86</sup> In a country as culturally sensitive as Afghanistan, this is an important consequence to note as the presence of females can have the tendency to “soften” not only the male US Soldiers, but also the male Afghans. Secondly, the Lioness Teams provided situational awareness for the Marines patrolling in Colonel Clardy’s RCT’s Area of Operations,

because the female Marines were able to build a rapport with the local women and gather information.<sup>87</sup> Certainly, female Soldiers, Navy Corpsmen and Marines engaged with the local populace in Iraq prior to this, but it was largely just for searches and in an informal manner.<sup>88</sup> The Lioness Program formalized the engagements and set the stage for the FETs that would begin operating with combat troops in Afghanistan.

The US Army used female Soldiers as Lionesses as well. In particular, the First Engineer Brigade, First Infantry Division used female Soldiers to go on patrols with male Soldiers in Ramadi in 2004.<sup>89</sup> The females went into homes with the patrols and stood at Traffic Control Points to comfort the Iraqi females who often became very distraught at the sight of American Soldiers. The females who participated sometimes had to forcefully search the women and even wrestle with them in order to get them to comply.<sup>90</sup> Ultimately, these same female Soldiers were later attached to USMC ground patrols after the units changed out (Relief in Place) and ended up in a firefight. Their observations on the lack of proper training for this mission is eerily reminiscent of what today's FETs are reporting as they redeploy and will be addressed later in this paper.

Lieutenant Matt Pottinger, together with First Lieutenant Johannah Shaffer, coined the term "Female Engagement Team" in February of 2009 when they co-founded and employed the first such team while serving with the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) in Helmand and Farah provinces.<sup>91</sup> Task Force Leatherneck established its FET program in July of 2009 following a well-publicized incident in which some insurgents, trapped in a compound and surrounded by Marines, managed to escape by dressing in birqas and walking through the Marine



cordon. Colonel Edward Yarnell, picking up where the SPMAGTF left off, expanded the FET concept into a full-blown program that was the first of its kind in Afghanistan.<sup>92</sup>

Today, the mission has grown from an additional duty for female Marines to purposely-formed units that work in security operations, searching vehicles and houses when females are involved and civil-military operations including village medical outreach and male and female shuras, or council meetings.<sup>93</sup> The Marine Corps runs a training program for approximately five months and trains female Marines to operate in the FETs. This training takes place at Twenty-Nine Palms, California and covers additional infantry training as well as a 40-hour Pashto language immersion class.<sup>94</sup> The FETs also support Enhanced Mohave Viper training at Twenty-Nine Palms, for units preparing to deploy, by accompanying foot patrols, assisting in Key Leader Engagements, and conducting searches among other activities.<sup>95</sup> Early reviews of this training program by FET 10-02 asked for additional infantry training, pistol and combat marksmanship training, advanced medical training, and refresher language training.<sup>96</sup> The Marine Corps continues to work to improve the training and added a five-day civil-military operations training package to the next iteration of training for FET 11-01.<sup>97</sup> The lack of meaningful infantry training is one of the same complaints the early Lioness teams in Iraq lodged in After Action Reviews. Because of their close proximity to combat, these teams occasionally found themselves participating in squad tactics. Despite the fact that the Marine Corps' training package is still a work in progress, it is leaps and bounds ahead of the training for General Purpose Forces of the US Army.

Before reviewing the training available to the General Purpose Forces, it is important to trace the evolution of the FET concept in the US Army. In December of

2009, MG John Macdonald, then the Deputy Commanding General, United States Forces-Afghanistan, addressed the lack of formalized US Army Female Engagement Teams in a memorandum addressing training needs for units preparing to deploy. He made the point that the USMC had great success with their FET program. He further indicated that the Army needed to put a solid training program in place that commanders could use prior to deployment in order to train female Soldiers to engage and “significantly improve relationship-building within Afghanistan, enhance information gathering and cast US forces in a positive light.”<sup>98</sup> The Army further recognized a shortfall in their ability to communicate with half the population as captured in a Combined Joint Intelligence Operations Center-Afghanistan strategic intelligence briefing authored by Major Maria Vedder, Civil Affairs, US Army Reserves, International Security Forces Afghanistan Headquarters. In her brief, Major Vedder makes a recommendation to “develop ISAF guidance for Female Engagement Teams to ensure consistency in reporting that is gained through quality training and engagement methods.”<sup>99</sup> Realizing the danger that could come with teams that might commit culturally offensive mistakes, Vedder’s brief seems to have caught the attention of those who would soon issue a requirement that trained FETs deploy with units and Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

In May of 2010, the then-Commander of International Security Forces-Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, recognized the importance of the FETs in his Area of Operations and issued a memorandum directing trained FETs deploy with units and PRTs arriving in the Operation Enduring Freedom Area of responsibility after 31 August 2011.<sup>100</sup> The Commander of Central Command endorsed this requirement and

the Army's formal Female Engagement Team program began with a trip report from the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army in January 2011, when General Peter Chiarelli made the observation that "Female Engagement Teams ... are critical and need to be addressed institutionally ... what will it take to institutionalize this process? How can we get these teams into the general purpose force?"<sup>101</sup> The Army G3/5/7 now had the task of preparing some sort of training to meet this requirement in short order.

Much of the training and, it could be argued, a redundant program, already exists in the curriculum of the Cultural Support Program (CSP), headquartered at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. This program, founded in 2010, trains female Soldiers from the General Purpose Force, Reserves, National Guard and recently, an Air Force major, who volunteer and who meet rigorous screening criteria. These service members then serve with special-operations forces to engage the females and adolescents of a host-nation "in support of ARSOF (Army Special Operations Forces) missions where their interaction with male service members may be deemed culturally inappropriate."<sup>102</sup> The CSP carefully separates itself from the Army's FET program and Civil Affairs, but runs a nine-day assessment and a six-week program of instruction for those that survive the assessment, teaching culture, engagement, information gathering, and survivability.<sup>103</sup> The first group of Cultural Support Team (CST) volunteers has returned from deployment and the second is currently in-country. The school plans to run four courses in fiscal year 2012 because of the overwhelming number of volunteers.<sup>104</sup> Additionally, they plan to have 25 permanent CSTs by 2016.<sup>105</sup> Apparently this six-week intensive training program the Special Operators conduct for the female Soldiers reaps great benefits, because according to Major General Bennet

Sacolick, the Commander of the Army Special Warfare Center and School, the reviews of the CST's performance have been, "off the charts."<sup>106</sup> Nearly thirty of these teams are operating in Afghanistan at the present time, but are distinguished from the FETs both by the intensity of their training, which includes squad tactics, ruck marching and land navigation, and by the fact they work only with Special Operations.

A 22 April 2011 decision briefing to the Vice Chief Staff of the Army to provide recommendations on pre-deployment training and institutionalization of FETs in the General Purpose Forces explored four courses of action for training FETs: Train the Trainer, Mobile Training Teams, Training at a Central Site, and Army Central Training Site with a Mobile Training Team Capability.<sup>107</sup> The recommendation and ultimate decision from this briefing was to put together a Handbook for Commanders and a Training Support Package that deploying units could use to train their own FETs. Therefore, the training for the General Purpose Forces is much more ad hoc than what either the Marine Corps or Cultural Support Teams receive. In June 2011, Training and Doctrine Command's Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) published the "Commander's Guide to Female Engagement Teams: Observations, Insights, and Lessons." This guide is available to anyone with Common Access Card access at the US Army Lessons Learned Information System (ALLIS) and also on the Army Training Network. CALL published the third version of the handbook in September 2011. In addition, a "Training Support Package" (TSP) is available on the Army Training Network, which consists of slides and notes to support FET training.

The "Commander's Guide to Female Engagement Teams" gives a fairly comprehensive history of FETs and admits that "the Army as a whole has been slow

and late in accepting the FET concept.”<sup>108</sup> The Commander’s Guide and the subsequent Training Support Package do pull from the US Army Special Operations Command CST Program of Instruction, the Marine Corps FET Program of Instruction, and also include a great deal of information that comes from an informal “FET Academy” in Regional Command-East. Dr. LisaRe Brooks, a Human Terrain Social Scientist, LTC Teresa Wolfgang, Commander of the 404<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion, and Shakila Reshtoon, the CJ-9 Women’s Affairs Advisor developed and implemented a 40-hour, 5-day training program in 2010 that focused on the engagement of Afghan females in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner through FETs.<sup>109</sup> This program was the precursor to the current FET Training Support Package.

The Regional-Command-East team used female Soldiers from Task Force Wolverine, a Brigade Command Team from the New Hampshire National Guard that was under the operational control of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division as their pilot program for testing.<sup>110</sup> TF Wolverine females had recently formed an organic FET in response to the growing need to engage the female population. The initial volunteers came from within the Task Force – personnel, logistics and other staff support sections. The first training included thirty hours of culture, daily language practice, information collection, a simulated shura, engagement techniques, interpreter management, religion, Commander’s Emergency Relief Program, administration and actual female engagements at the nearby Egyptian Hospital.<sup>111</sup> TF Wolverine trained their FET personnel on tactical movement, patrolling and basic defensive skills with organic resources. The trainers revamped the training based on feedback from the first class, adding storyboards, working with the media, Afghan traditional medicine and some

required reading.<sup>112</sup> The training had more than ten instructors, 2-3 translators and assistance from Afghan business women and government officials.

The course rapidly became so popular as the only formalized FET training within the Army that Dr. Brooks and LTC Wolfgang found themselves training Soldiers from RC-North and South, as well as Department of State officials and Airmen and Sailors from the PRTs. Eventually, a great deal of this training found its way into the Army's Training Support Package. The most important part of this early training is that the trainers were Subject Matter Experts in their fields of Human Terrain Analysis and Civil Affairs, which is not the case with the current "train the trainer" version of the Army TSP.

The working group from the Combined Arms Center G3 did not have much time to develop this Training Support Package. The kick-off session occurred on 29 April with the TSP going live on 15 June. That said, they pulled together an impressive group of Subject Matter Experts from US Army Training and Doctrine Command, US Army Special Operations Command, the USMC Security Cooperation Education Center, the Army Research Institute, the US Army Mission Command Center of Excellence Counter-Insurgency Seminar, the Defense Language Institute, and various FET veterans and units from previous deployments.<sup>113</sup> The resulting TSP lays out an ambitious, two-week training program (see Figure 1) that the BCTs are to teach themselves.<sup>114</sup> Upon completion of this training and a commander's certification, the

Army will award the Soldiers the Personnel Development Skill Identifier of G3F:

Day 1		Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Welcome/Course Admin		Language Training	Language Training	Language Training	Language Training
Introduction to FET		Afghan History	Afghan Culture & Way of Life	Traditional Afghan Medicine	Cross-Gender and Cross Cultural Communications
FET Organization and Team Assignments(PE)		Religion (Islam) & Women		Afghan Superstitions	
Language Training					
Lunch Break					
Intro to Stability Ops		Religion (Islam) & Women	Afghan Culture & Way of Life	Cross-Gender and Cross Cultural Communications (CG&CCC)	CG &CCC
Intro to COIN		(Movie: "The Stoning of Soraya M.")	(Movie: "Rise")		(CG&CCC PE)
Intro to IIA					Security & Situational Awareness

Day 6		Day 7	Day 8	Day 9
Language Training		Language Training	Language Training	Culminating Exercise
Interpreter Mngt.		FET Mission Planning/ Planning Engagements	Working with Regional Partners	
(Interpreter Mngt. PE)			Information Gathering	
Female Search Cons.				
(Female Search PE)				
Lunch Break				
Media Engagement		FET Mission Planning PE	Reporting	Course Critique
		Key Leader Engagement & Afghan Governance		
(Media Engagement PE)		(Key Ldr Engagement PE)	(Reporting PE)	

<b>FET TSP Module Key</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Introduction to FET	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. FET Engagement Considerations
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Afghan Culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Enablers
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. FET Mission Considerations	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Culminating Exercise

Figure 1. FET Training Schedule

While certainly well-intentioned, the overriding flaw in this Training Support Package is obvious. It includes long lectures on Afghan history and culture but does not provide Subject Matter Experts to teach the classes. It includes references to Defense Language Institute Dari and Pashto language training, but no native or trained speaker to assist. The deploying brigades and battalions are to resource the instructors organically, and it is doubtful that many of these units have anyone assigned who is an expert in Afghan culture or language. Because of this, some units are choosing to use the Army TSP as a resource and putting together their own training packages.

For example, the Commander of 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry, currently preparing for their Afghanistan deployment, appointed a female Captain as the FET lead to put together the training package. The unit is contracting the cultural training with IDS International, a national security consulting firm.<sup>115</sup> The New York National Guard's 2d Battalion, 108<sup>th</sup> Infantry FET team leader was completely unaware of the Army TSP and chose to put together her own training based on a syllabus developed by the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division.<sup>116</sup> The 37<sup>th</sup> IBCT of the Ohio National Guard also put together their own training package.<sup>117</sup> Upon arrival at their mobilization station at Camp Shelby, the training cadre assisted them in completing the training and incorporated FET into the COIN Situational Training Exercise (STX) lanes.<sup>118</sup> They are using the TSP as a "guide," deciding what they can teach from organic resources and then using both Dr. Brooks and an instructor from the Army Research Institute. They have the added benefit of access to a five-week Dari Mobile Training Team, which will greatly enhance the language capabilities of the FETs.<sup>119</sup> However, it is important to note that the trainers at Camp Shelby were not adequately prepared to train FET, having sent one observer



to the CST training at Fort Bragg and otherwise incorporating their own observations from previous deployments into the training.<sup>120</sup>

Thus, it would seem that the Army's efforts to standardize training for the GPF still has a long way to go to achieve equality with either the USMC training or that of the CSTs. Females in the deploying units are reaching across the force to talk to FETs that have already deployed in an attempt to gain some situational awareness and thus, an informal network of "FET Experts" has formed and is sharing resources. Each Commander is putting different emphasis on the importance of the FETs and thus, each unit is putting different emphasis on the training, leading to seams and gaps in the knowledge of those about to undertake these missions. Indeed, "a robust training regimen must be created if the FETs are to realize their full potential. Courses in tactical questioning, human terrain analysis, cultural understanding, and advanced situational awareness are essential."<sup>121</sup>

The decision brief to the Vice Chief of Staff also indicated that FET personnel to be assigned to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams would be trained at a central location, Camp Atterbury, Indiana.<sup>122</sup> However, since PRT's are multi-component, Joint and Interagency organizations, a Request for Forces from Department of the Army is needed to source these FETs on anything other than a volunteer or "voluntold" basis.<sup>123</sup> This has not happened.<sup>124</sup> The PRTs face the same challenge as the BCTs in that the FETs are not properly resourced with personnel. Female Soldiers who are trained in a specific Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and part of a squad or a team are reluctant to leave their buddies and become part of a FET, because it leaves their squad or section short on personnel skilled to do an important job such as medic,

supply, military intelligence, or communications. This leads to squad and platoon leaders sending less-than-stellar performers to join the FETs simply to get them out of the unit and off doing something else. Those who have been involved in the FET mission so far unanimously agree on one thing-it takes a certain personality to be successful in a FET and the Soldiers must WANT to be there. A recent Orbis Operations reports sums it up with the assertion that FET “candidates should be confident, inquisitive, socially adept, skilled at applying logic to unfamiliar circumstances, able to demonstrate a high degree of situational awareness and capable of making conversation with people at all levels of society.”<sup>125</sup> Changing this mindset in the units and finding a better way to train the female Soldiers are going to be of paramount importance in the success of the FET program.

In addition to this, another challenge the FETs face is a lack of qualified female interpreters. Putting a male interpreter with the team lessens the effectiveness, because the women cannot truly “engage” with a male present due to the cultural considerations explored earlier. The experience of 404<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion is representative of what a number of units face. The female interpreters they did have access to were physically not up to the rigors of going into the villages and not particularly interested in helping with the FET mission.<sup>126</sup> Due to the cultural constraints of women not being allowed to work outside the home without the accompaniment of a male relative, finding female native speakers willing to work with Coalition Forces is almost impossible. Of the three levels of interpreters, the best, often Afghan-Americans with a security clearance, go to high-ranking officers in ISAF and the third level, local nationals who may have very limited English, are assigned to missions such as the

FET.<sup>127</sup> Units are trying to overcome the language barrier with Pashto and Dari training during pre-deployment, but the lack of good female interpreters will remain a problem for the foreseeable future.

The impact of sending untrained or even barely trained female Soldiers into villages with little or no language skills and male interpreters is clear. The experience of LTC Barbara Crawford, FET Officer in Charge and Gender Advisor with the Kandahar PRT in Regional Command-South, is emblematic of what many of the FETs are facing:

We are sending 19 and 20 year olds out to villages to communicate with 19 and 20 year old wives with three children, who can't read, write or speak English. I went on a mission with some young FET members ... the village ladies wanted to know about us, build relationships, tell their story, hear our story. The FET wanted to push their agenda, which clearly agitated the women and they were pretty negative about what the FET leader was "pushing on them," a radio/book literacy program.<sup>128</sup>

A comprehensive training program that addresses the need for building relationships and listening rather than pushing our agenda is crucial to the success of these teams, and cannot be realized without Subject Matter Experts and a standardized training program that is used Army-wide. Leaving the training up to the individual units allows commanders to marginalize FET training if they don't happen to believe it is important.

### The Way Ahead

Accepting the notion that women are inherently relationship-builders and accustomed to building networks,<sup>129</sup> it seems the Army as the nation's landpower experts needs to devote more time and effort into defining the proper role for Female Engagement Teams, how to use them effectively and how best to train them. Unfortunately, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of the FET initiatives because they can't necessarily be numerically qualified.<sup>130</sup> Anecdotal evidence, storyboards, and After Action Reports exist that indicate the teams are making a

difference with business projects, but empirical evidence and personal interviews show that when the Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority occurs, the successful projects are sometimes lost in transition and may take several months to start again.<sup>131</sup> It is worthwhile to note that the Kabul-based International Joint Command (IJC) FET staff is currently conducting a comprehensive assessment of all FETs in theater through a survey in an attempt to capture as much information as possible on FET initiatives.<sup>132</sup>

As mentioned earlier, FETs operate at two levels and the Army needs to acknowledge this. Much like the CST's, FETs attached to maneuver battalions often function as extensions of the combat patrols, calming the women, talking to them, searching them, and being the eyes and ears in the areas of the compounds that the male Soldiers cannot enter. Obviously, this means the women operating at this level need additional training in things such as patrolling, security, searching, proper questioning techniques, observation, etc. The FETs at the operational level work with the local key leaders, the Directors of Women's Affairs (DOWA) and the non-governmental organizations to provide economic opportunities for women, especially widows who may have no male means of support. They also partner with Afghan females at the provincial level to mentor them in how to keep these initiatives going and how to be better leaders.<sup>133</sup> FETs at the operational level have also recently begun using American female military police to engage with the Afghan female uniformed police (AUP) in order to recruit and hire more female police.<sup>134</sup> Other FET initiatives include conducting hygiene and midwife classes in Dand and Eastern Panjwai,<sup>135</sup> to overcome the years of forced home isolation and even more sophisticated efforts such as the small business ventures mentioned earlier.

In her handover brief from CJTF-101 to CJTF-1, LTC Kristine Petermann, G3

Plans Officer for the United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC) who served as a placeholder between the 404<sup>th</sup> CA Battalion and their relief, the 489<sup>th</sup>, clearly illustrates the difference between these FET missions:<sup>136</sup>

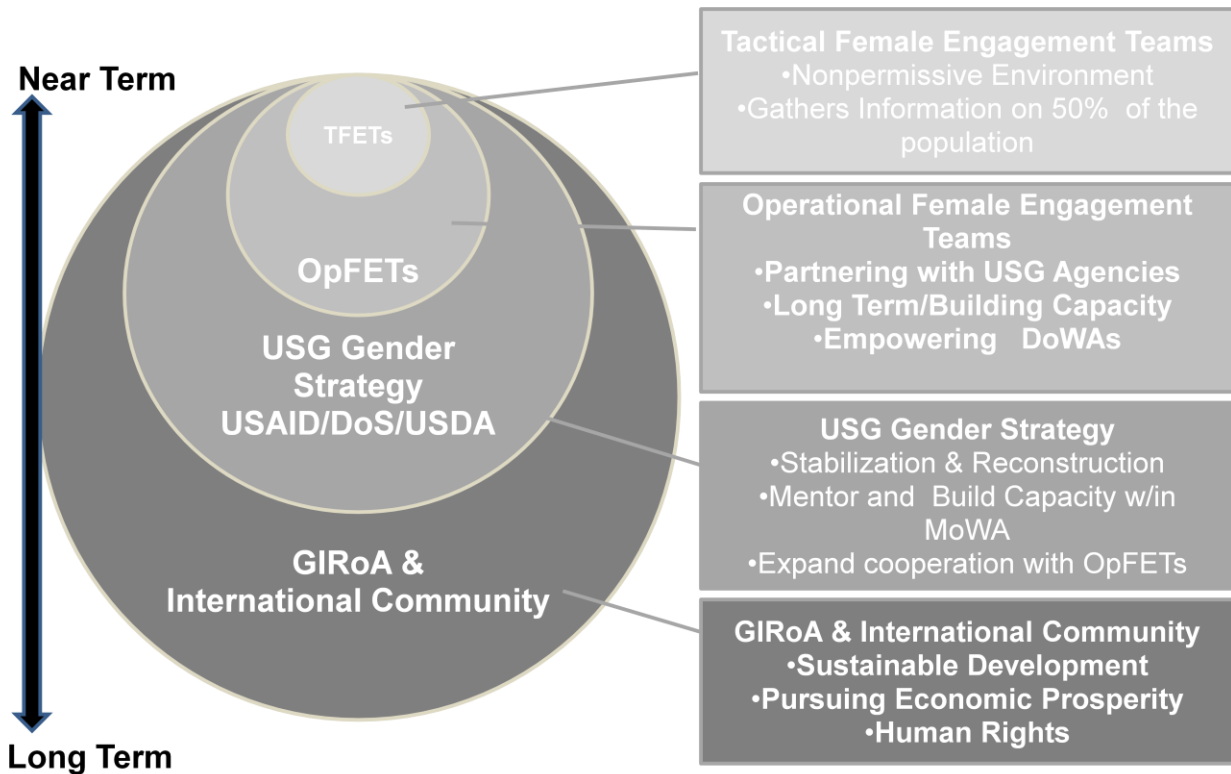


Figure 2

At the “boots on the ground” level, females serving at the tactical level on a FET should not then immediately serve at the operational level in the same area. Gaining the trust of the Afghan females with humanitarian efforts the day after accompanying a combat patrol and conducting searches is counter-productive at best. That means dedicated FET assets at each level that are trained and prepared to concentrate on their particular mission.

If resources were not constrained, setting up separate FET units would be ideal, and is, in fact, the recommendation of FET Soldiers who served with Task Force Currahee of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne in RC-East in 2011.<sup>137</sup> But in this time of shrinking resources, it is naïve to expect the Army to resource new all-female units that would concentrate solely on FET missions. Rather, the Army should require all females preparing to deploy successfully complete FET training either at a resident class or with a mobile training team at a Combat Maneuver Training Center. This would ensure standardization of training for all deploying females. Then, the maneuver units would have the autonomy to ask for volunteers from among the females in the unit and build organic FETs. When needed, these FETs would accompany the patrols to interact with the Afghan women.

At the operational level, the training needs to be conducted in the same way. All females assigned to PRTs, MISO, ADTs, or any other type of deploying unit must be required to undergo the standardized training at a resident class or mobile training team. The FET scenarios incorporated into the STX lanes at training centers are a step in the right direction, but again the training is left up to the command. Commanders of these units could then either dedicate certain volunteer females to FET missions, or build teams that would conduct the missions as needed. Certainly, dedicated, full-time FETs would be ideal, but with redeployments and a shrinking pool of personnel to draw from in the upcoming years, this is unlikely.

Furthermore, the Army needs to make FETs doctrine. Much of the existing US COIN doctrine applies to FETs, but separate doctrine must be created that builds on the strengths and recognizes the limitations of these teams.<sup>138</sup> We cannot prepare to fight

the last war. We will not be in Afghanistan forever. FETs can be used in future contingencies in much the same way, with adjustments in the language/cultural training. Building relationships transcends the different cultures we may encounter and female Soldiers are uniquely positioned to capitalize on this. Generally, local women are free to come and go during a conflict while the men are not because the men are viewed as combatants, thus allowing the women to build networks and pass information.<sup>139</sup> One example is Mexico. In the last five years, reports have increased of women playing critical roles in the success or failure of daily tactical operations in the drug war.<sup>140</sup> The ability to gain access to these women and their social groups could be a critical tool to quell the violence on our own Southern border.<sup>141</sup> While the Army may not in the foreseeable future be large enough to have female Soldiers dedicated to nothing but FET operations, having a trained cohort of General Purpose Forces females, much like the CSTs, could provide a pool from which to draw without going through the lengthy train-up now required to certify a FET member. As a vital aspect for success in counterinsurgency operations, which is rapidly becoming a core competency of our military, the Army must continue FETs.

### Conclusion

If the future of the FET program lies in standardized training and a codification of FETs into US Army doctrine, what of the future of the women of Afghanistan where the FETs currently operate? With current plans to withdraw the majority of US Forces by 2014, no female US Soldiers will be left to continue to educate and empower the women. This mission is too important to abandon at a time when the future of Afghanistan is shaky at best. The initiative to have US Military Police train the female

Afghan National Police is a good one that must continue until we withdraw. These trained Afghan police can then bring up a new generation of female Afghan police with knowledge of combatives, computer skills, language skills, and self-confidence.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, the next cohort of FETs must begin to train the females in the Afghan National Security Forces to continue to build relationships with village women. The stated recruiting objectives for the Afghan National Army is close to 10% of end strength, or 9,500 women with an additional 5,000 women in the Afghan National Police.<sup>143</sup> The Afghans could learn from our experiences with ad hoc FETs and institutionalize them early, providing training and a clear mission. If the GIRoA were to build and institutionalize FETS, they could “continue to develop female capacity in ‘clusters’ that facilitate security for the women, consolidate infrastructure modification, and provide professional development ... opportunities.”<sup>144</sup> On the operational level, much of the FET work in establishing small businesses can be monitored by NGOs and these Afghan-led FETs. Since these are local women who already know the family relationships and speak the language, the learning curve will be minimal and they should easily fit into village life. In addition, they present a clear role-model to young Afghan girls of women who are educated and successful in both protecting their communities and strengthening their country.

Afghanistan is arguably one of the most difficult countries in terms of gender roles that Coalition Forces may ever be involved in assisting.<sup>145</sup> Although the major troop-contributing nations are under immense domestic pressure to bring forces home, those pressures should not result in short-changing the Afghan people and just “renting” calm.<sup>146</sup> It will take visionary leadership from both the government and its supporters to



ensure that any reintegration and reconciliation process results in a just and inclusive peace that protects the rights of all Afghans, including women and girls.<sup>147</sup> Likewise, it will take visionary leadership within the US Army to ensure a transition of the FET mission to our Afghan counterparts and NGOs so that progress is not lost. And it will take continued effort to keep the program viable within the Army so we do not continue to fight the last war, but rather can look ahead to future contingencies and know early on how we can use the relationship-building capacities of our female Soldiers to influence the other half of the population to meet our strategic goals of security, governance and development.

## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> Seth G. Jones, "It Takes the Villages: Bringing Change into Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2010, 120.

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Chayes, *The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 34.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Eric Jardine, "City Gods and Village Deities: the Urban Bias in Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review*, July-August 2011, 53.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould, *Invisible History: Afghanistan's Untold Story*, (San Francisco: City Lights, 2009) 319.

<sup>8</sup> US Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*, Field Manual 3-24 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, December 16, 2006), 1-12.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Mr. Peter Vallee, Canadian Army, Retired and Senior Trainer for IDS International, interview by author, Arlington, VA, August 22, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Huma Ahman-Ghost, "A History of Women in Afghanistan: Lessons Learnt for the Future or Yesterdays and Tomorrows: the Women of Afghanistan," *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 4, no. 3, (May 2003): 3 <http://www.bridgew.edu/soas/jiws/May03/Afghanistan.pdf> (accessed 25 August 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973 quoted in Huma Ahman-Ghost, "A History of Women in Afghanistan: Lessons Learnt for the Future or Yesterdays and Tomorrows: the Women of Afghanistan," *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 4, no. 3, (May 2003): 3 <http://www.bridgew.edu/soas/jiws/May03/Afghanistan.pdf> (accessed 25 August 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Martin Ewans, *A Short History of Afghanistan: its People and Politics*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 80.

<sup>15</sup> Ahman-Ghosh, "A History of Women in Afghanistan," 3.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ewans, *A Short History*, 85.

<sup>18</sup> Ahman-Ghosh, "A History of Women in Afghanistan," 3.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould, *Invisible History*, 61.

<sup>20</sup> Ewans, *A Short History*, 94.

<sup>21</sup> Ahman-Ghosh, "A History of Women in Afghanistan," 4.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Ewans, *A Short History*, 115.

<sup>24</sup> Ahman-Ghosh, "A History of Women in Afghanistan," 6.

<sup>25</sup> Ewans, *A Short History*, 141.

<sup>26</sup> Ahman-Ghosh, "A History of Women in Afghanistan," 6.

<sup>27</sup> Valentine M. Moghadam, "Nationalist Agendas and Women's Rights: Conflicts in Afghanistan in the Twentieth Century, In Lois A. West, ed., *Feminist Nationalism*, New York: Routledge, quoted in Huma Ahman-Ghost, "A History of Women in Afghanistan: Lessons Learnt for the Future or Yesterdays and Tomorrows: the Women of Afghanistan," *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 4, no. 3, (May 2003): 6, <http://www.bridgew.edu/soas/jiws/May03/Afghanistan.pdf> (accessed 25 August 2011).

<sup>28</sup> Ahman-Ghosh, "A History of Women in Afghanistan," 7.

<sup>29</sup> Ewans, *A Short History*, 184.

<sup>30</sup> Ahman-Ghosh, "A History of Women in Afghanistan," 7.

<sup>31</sup> Zoya, with J. Follain and R. Cristofari. *Zoya's Story: An Afghan Woman's Struggle for Freedom*. (New York: William Morrow, 2002), 226.

<sup>32</sup> Fitzgerald and Gould, *Invisible History*, 251.

<sup>33</sup> Human Rights Watch. *The "Ten-Dollar Talib" and Women's Rights: Afghan Women and The Risks of Reintegration and Reconciliation*. (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, July 2010), 5.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>35</sup> Tom A. Peter, "Women's Rights in Afghanistan Lose Steam," *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 March 2011, Proquest, (Accessed 1 September 2011).

<sup>36</sup> Fitzgerald and Gould, *Invisible History*, 316.

<sup>37</sup> *2009 Afghanistan Women Country Report Women for Afghan Women*, March 2010, quoted in Larissa Mahalisko, "Female Engagement in the MEB A AO," 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Afghanistan, MICA Cultural Intelligence Team (MCIT), Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, <https://www.mccll.usmc.mil/index.Coalition Forcesm?DISP=binder.Coalition Forcesm.&BINDERID=1546&DOIT=view>, 5, (Accessed 19 September 2011).

<sup>38</sup> Tom A. Peter, "Women's Rights in Afghanistan Lose Steam," *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 March 2011, Proquest, (Accessed 1 September 2011).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Sally Armstrong, *Veiled Threat: the Hidden Power of the Women of Afghanistan*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2002, 132.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 152..

<sup>43</sup> Tom A. Peter, "Women's Rights."

<sup>44</sup> Ulrich Fichtner, "The Third World War: Why NATO Troops Can't Deliver Peace in Afghanistan," *Der Spiegel Online*, May 29, 2008, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,556304,00.html>, (accessed July 11, 2008) quoted in Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould, *Invisible History: Afghanistan's Untold Story*, San Francisco: City Lights, 2009, 316.

<sup>45</sup> CPT Heather DiSilvio, "4-4 IBCT Female Engagement Team." Brief to Commanders and First Sergeants. Fort Carson, Colorado: 18 August 2011. <https://forums.army.mil/SECURE/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=1537443> (accessed 23 August 2011).

<sup>46</sup> Rina Amiri, "From Pawns to Principals: The Future of Afghan Women," in *Women for Afghan Woman*, edited by Sunita Mehta, Esther Hyneman, Batya Swift Yasgur, and Andrea Labis, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002, 210.

<sup>47</sup> Rory Hanlin, "One Team's Approach to Village Stability Operations," *Small Wars Journal Online*, 4 September 2011, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/node/11412>, (accessed 20 October 2011).

<sup>48</sup> Scott D. Wilson, "Cultures-and Their Differences-Matter." *Army*. 61, no. 9. September 11, 2011, 32.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Barfield, "Afghanistan's Ethnic Puzzle: Decentralizing Power before the US Withdrawal," *Foreign Affairs*, 90, no. 5 (Sept/Oct 2011): 54-65, in Proquest (accessed 3 October 2011).

<sup>51</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), quoted in Charles Lindholm "The Social Structure of Emotional Constraint: The Court of Louis XIV and the Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan," *Frontier Perspectives, Essays in Comparative Anthropology*, (Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 1996), 195. In their anthropological studies, the Lindholm's refer to the Pashtuns as Puhktun, one of several variations on the spelling.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Rina Amiri, "From Pawns to Principals," 205.

<sup>54</sup> US Department of the Army, "My Cousin's Enemy is My Friend: a Study of Pashtun 'Tribes' in Afghanistan," *Afghanistan Research Reachback Center White Paper*, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Training and Doctrine Command G2 Human Terrain System, United States Army, September, 2009), 2.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Cherry and Charles Lindholm, "Life Behind the Veil," in *Faces of Anthropology: A Reader for the 21st Century*, edited by Kevin A. Rafferty and Dorothy Chinwe Ukaegbu (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007): 172.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Gina Mansouri Ladenheim, email message to author, 1 September 2011.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Veronica Doubleday, *Three Women of Herat*. (India: Replica Press, 2006), 12.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Cherry and Charles Lindholm, "Life Behind the Veil," 174.

<sup>65</sup> US Department of the Army, "My Cousin's Enemy is My Friend," 9.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>67</sup> CPT Heather DiSilvio, "4-4 IBCT Female Engagement Team."

<sup>68</sup> Charles Lindholm "The Social Structure of Emotional Constraint: The Court of Louis XIV and the Pukhtun of Northern Pakistan," *Frontier Perspectives, Essays in Comparative Anthropology*, (Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 1996), 196.

<sup>69</sup> Cherry Lindholm, "The Swat Pukhtun Family," 25.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Nancy Tapper, *Bartered Brides. Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology*, edited by Jack Goody, Stephen Gudeman, Michael Herzfeld, and Jonathan Parry, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 106.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 104.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Isabelle Delloye. *Women of Afghanistan*, translated by Marjolijn de Jager, (St. Paul, Minnesota: Ruminator Books, 2003), 21.

<sup>76</sup> Helen Hardacre, "The Impact of Fundamentalism on Women, the Family, and Interpersonal Relations," in *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family and Education*, edited by Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, (Vol. 2), (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 142.

<sup>77</sup> Shahla Hammond, IDS Site Manager with Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, telephone interview with author, 30 August 2011.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. This was also the experience of MAJ Jocelyn Levanthal and LTC Teresa Wolfgang of the 404<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion during their time in RC-East in 2010-2011.

<sup>79</sup> Matt Pottinger, Hali Jilani, and Claire Russo, "Half Hearted: Trying to Win Afghanistan Without Afghan Women," *Small Wars Journal online*, 2010, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/370-pottinger.pdf> (accessed 3 August 2011), 2.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Asne Seierstad, *The Bookseller of Kabul*, Trans. by Ingrid Christopherson, (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2002), xiv.

<sup>82</sup> Deborah Rodriguez, *Kabul Beauty School*, (New York: Random House, 2007), 7. Also see US Department of the Army. "Commander's Guide to Female Engagement Teams Version 3." Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Center for Army Lessons Learned, September 2011, 4.

<sup>83</sup> LTC Teresa Wolfgang, Commander 404<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion, interview by author, Fort Dix, NJ, 9 September 2011.

<sup>84</sup> Regina T. Akers, "In and Out of Harm's Way: Women in Combat," *Barstow Log* 13, No 11, 19 March 2009. Also see Meg McLagan and Daria Sommer's excellent documentary on this program, "Lioness."

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Colonel Stacy Clardy, III, Commanding Officer, 2d Regimental Combat Team 2 (RCT-2), interview By Master Gunnery Sergeant Pat McLane, 10 October 2007, Camp Ripper, Al-Asad, Iraq, <https://www.mccl.usmc.mil/index.CoalitionForcesm?DOIT=view&BINDERID=1546&DISP=Binder.CoalitionForcesm>. (Accessed 24 August 2011).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Jennifer M. Farina, "Neither Joan of Arc nor Tank Girl: The Struggle to be Sensible in Preparing Female Marines for the Twenty-First Century Operating Environment," Master of Military Studies Thesis, Quantico, Virginia: Marine Corps University, 4 May 2009, <https://www.mccl.usmc.mil/index.CoalitionForcesm?DOIT=view&BINDERID=1546&DISP=binder.CoalitionForcesm>. (Accessed 24 August 2011), 17.

<sup>89</sup> Meg McLagan and Daria Sommers, directors, "Lioness," 82 minutes, Room 11 Productions, 2010, DVD.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Matt Pottinger and Jilani Hall, "Female Engagement Teams-Findings and Recommendations," Memo for Colonel Edward Yarnell, Task Force Leatherneck G3 FECC Officer in Charge, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 30 September 2009, <https://www.mccl.usmc.mil/index.CoalitionForcesm?DOIT=view&BINDERID=1546&DISP=binder.CoalitionForcesm>, (Accessed 24 August 2011), 1.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Gerald Nelapa, "Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan. Lessons, Observations, and Recommendations: FET Employment In Regional Command-Southwest (C (SW))," Quantico, Virginia: United States Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, 24 August 2011. Also Mr. Peter Vallee, Canadian Army, Retired and Senior Trainer for IDS International, interview by author, Arlington, VA, August 22, 2011, 14.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>95</sup> Shahla Hammond, email message to author, 29 September 2011.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Major General John Macdonald, "Training Improvement Directives for US Forces Deploying To Afghanistan," Memorandum for See Distribution, Kabul, Afghanistan. December 6, 2009.

<sup>99</sup> Major Maria Vedder, "Recommended ISAF Guidance for Female Engagement Teams," Combined Joint Intelligence Operations Center: Afghanistan, 23 February 2010, <https://www.mccll.usmc.mil/index.Coalition Forcesm?DISP=binder.Coalition Forcesm.&BINDERID=1546&DOIT=view>, (Accessed 24 August 2011).

<sup>100</sup> General Stanley McChrystal, "Engagement With Afghan Females Directive." Memorandum for COM IJC, COM ISAF SOFC FACC, CJSOTFCOM, TF-714, CSTC-A, NTM-!. Kabul, Afghanistan. May 31, 2010.

<sup>101</sup> US Department of the Army G3/5/7 Training Directorate, "Female Engagement Teams (FET) Decision Briefing," Washington DC: G3/5/7, 22 April 2011.

<sup>102</sup> "About the Cultural Support Program," US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, home page, <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/cst/about/html>, (Accessed 22 August 2011). See also Kevin Maurer, "In New Elite Army Unit Women Serve Alongside Special Forces, but First They Must Make the Cut," *Washington Post Magazine*, 23 October 2011, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/in-new-elite-army-unit-women-serve-alongside-special-forces-but-first-they-must-make-the-cut/2011/10/06/gIQAZWOSMM\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/in-new-elite-army-unit-women-serve-alongside-special-forces-but-first-they-must-make-the-cut/2011/10/06/gIQAZWOSMM_story.html), (accessed 23 October 2011). Also see Robert D. Kaplan's book, *Imperial Grunts*, New York: Random House, 2005, 264. Mr. Kaplan outbriefs the leadership of US Special Forces that "Women, who were still barred from the ranks of Special Forces, were also needed. Women attracted less notice during stakeouts and intelligence-related operations. Women could search females detained during mission hits. Women were going to be forced on SF anyway at some point. Might as well develop a plan in advance for using them."

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Captain Katie Winwood, Directorate of Special Operations Proponency Cultural Support Program-Operations, email message to author, 22 August 2011.

<sup>105</sup> Lolita C. Baldor, "Death Highlight's Women's Role in Special Ops Team," Associated Press, 26 October 2011, <http://news.yahoo.com/tech/?back=%2Fdeath-highlights-womens-role-special-ops-teams-195034667.html>, (Accessed 26 October 2011).

<sup>106</sup> Christian Lowe, "Female Special Operators Now in Combat," *Military.com*, 29 June 2011, <http://www.military.com/news/article/female-special-operators-now-incombat.html?ESRC=army-a.nl> (accessed 1 September 2011).

<sup>107</sup> US Department of the Army G-3/5/7, "Female Engagement Teams (FET) Decision Briefing, US Department of the Army: Washington, DC, 22 April 2011.

<sup>108</sup> US Department of the Army, "Commander's Guide to Female Engagement Teams, V3," Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: US Department of the Army, September 2011, 5, [https://www.illis.mil/ARMY/document\\_repository/Handbook/11-38\\_Cdrs\\_Guide\\_to\\_FETs\\_V3-CDR-1828.pdf](https://www.illis.mil/ARMY/document_repository/Handbook/11-38_Cdrs_Guide_to_FETs_V3-CDR-1828.pdf), (accessed 5 October 2011).

<sup>109</sup> LTC Teresa Wolfgang, email message to author, 28 October 2011.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Major Ted Pelzel and Mr. Dean Gilbert, "Female Engagement Team (FET) Training Support Package (TSP) Decision Brief," Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combined Arms Center, 24 May 2011.

<sup>114</sup> The TSP can be viewed at [https://atn.army.mil/dsp\\_template.aspx?dplD=89](https://atn.army.mil/dsp_template.aspx?dplD=89),

<sup>115</sup> CPT Heather DiSilvio, email message to author, 29 September 2011. In January 2012, the unit cancelled this contract training because it conflicted with their Pashto training. According to a 9 January email from CPT DiSilvio, they elected instead to have the language trainers conduct cultural training based on the IDS POI.

<sup>116</sup> 1LT Kristen Rouse, email message to author, 7 August 2011. The unit has since been re-missioned to a security role in Kuwait and did not deploy to Afghanistan.

<sup>117</sup> Dr. LisaRe Brooks, email message to author, 6 October 2011.

<sup>118</sup> LTC Doug Carbone, telephone interview with author, 9 November 2011.

<sup>119</sup> SFC Chad Layne, forwarded email to COL Patty Ryan and author, 21 July 2011.

<sup>120</sup> LTC Doug Carbone, telephone interview with author, 9 November 2011.

<sup>121</sup> Joseph A. L'Etoile, "Transforming the Conflict in Afghanistan," *Prism* 2, no. 4, September 2011): 3-16, <http://www.ndu.edu/press/transforming-conflict-afghanistan.html>, (Accessed 3 October, 2011).

<sup>122</sup> US Department of the Army G-3/5/7, "FET Decision Briefing."

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> LTC Gregg Taylor, email message to author, 13 September 2011.

<sup>125</sup> Claire Russo and Shannon Spann, "Female Networking Operations: A Tactical Tool for Strategic Advantage," *Orbis Operations*, 2011, 10-11.



<sup>126</sup> SFC Frank Lugo and Major Jocelyn Levanthal, 404<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion, interview with author, Fort Dix, New Jersey, 9 September 2011.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> LTC Barbara Crawford, email message to author, 26 October 2011

<sup>129</sup> Anne-Marie Slaughter in Heather Hurlburt's, "The Feminine Realpolitik," *Foreign Policy*, 18 July 2011, 2.

<sup>130</sup> The same is true for the Cultural Support Teams. See Kevin Maurer, "In New Elite Army Unit, Women Serve Alongside Special Forces but First They Must Make the Cut," *Washington Post Magazine*, 23 October 2011, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/in-new-elite-army-unit-women-serve-alongside-special-forces-but-first-they-must-make-the-cut/2011/10/06/gIQAZWOSMM\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/in-new-elite-army-unit-women-serve-alongside-special-forces-but-first-they-must-make-the-cut/2011/10/06/gIQAZWOSMM_story.html), (accessed 23 October 2011).

<sup>131</sup> LTC Teresa Wolfgang, interview by author, Fort Dix, New Jersey, 9 September 2011.

<sup>132</sup> MAJ Sheila Medeiros, email message to COL Ellen Haring and forwarded to author, 14 November 2011.

<sup>133</sup> Georgia Agri-Business Development Team 1 Women's Initiatives Training Team, "Shura Between GA ADT 1 and the Logar DOWA, Pul'-e Alam District Center," 23 August 2011, <https://forums.army.mil/SECURE/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=1573024>, (accessed 26 October 2011).

<sup>134</sup> CPT Iajaira Perez, Provost Marshal 116<sup>th</sup> IBCT Virginia National Guard, email message to author 18 August 2011.

<sup>135</sup> 2LT Catherine Gibbs, HHC 1-5 INF, 1/25, email message to author, 18 August 2011.

<sup>136</sup> LTC Kristine Petermann, "Female Engagement Team Continuity Brief," Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan: Regional Command-East, May 2011.

<sup>137</sup> SSG Denise Ferniza and 1LT Nicole Myers, interview by MAJ Ginger Shaw of the Center for Military History, Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, 10 June 2011. SSG Ferniza suggests a separate company-sized element of FET Soldiers assigned to the Division Headquarters and further tasked organized to the lower echelon units as needed.

<sup>138</sup> Joseph A. L'Etoile, "Transforming the Conflict in Afghanistan." *PRISM* 2, no. 4 (September 2011): 3-16. <http://www.ndu.edu/press/transforming-conflict-afghanistan.html>, (accessed 4 November 2011).

<sup>139</sup> Oriana Zill de Granados, producer, "The War We Are Living," 58 minutes, THIRTEEN and Fork Films, 2011, DVR.

<sup>140</sup> Claire Russo and Shannon Spann, "Female Networking Operations," 7.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> CPT Megan Spangler, "Female Engagement Initiative: Professionalizing the AUP," *Military Police Bulletin*, 19-11-2, 33, <https://forums.army.mil/SECURE/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=1553778&lang=en-US>, (accessed 4 November 2011).

<sup>143</sup> Dr. Jack D. Kem and LTC Frank A. Smith, "Female Engagement Teams: Balancing Tactical Resource Requirements with the Achievement of Strategic Objectives,": Camp Eggers, Afghanistan: NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, 5 September 2011, 14.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 14. This was also a recommendation of LTC Kristine Petermann in her, "Female Engagement Team Continuity Brief," Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan: Regional Command-East, May 2011.

<sup>145</sup> Claire Russo and Shannon Spann, "Female Networking Operations," 9.

<sup>146</sup> Human Rights Watch, *The "Ten Dollar Talib,"* 7.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.